

The Director Selectee for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources

S.C. Senate set to confirm new SCDNR director by the end of January

COLUMBIA, SC, UNITED STATES, January 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Tom Mullikin, a noted global expedition leader, attorney, and the current chair of the S.C. Floodwater Commission, is set to become the next director of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), pending S.C. Senate confirmation later this month.



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In November, the seven-member South Carolina Natural Resources Board unanimously selected Mullikin to lead SCDNR as the department's next director. SCDNR employs more than 1,100 working across the state's 46 counties. According to the department's website, those employees include technicians, biologists, law enforcement officers (game wardens), educators, scientists, and administrators.

"Tom Mullikin is the perfect fit for this post," said Col. Steve Vitali, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), who has served as operations officer in the National Security Task Force of the Mullikin-led S.C. Floodwater Commission. "Tom is not only passionate about the outdoors but in involving all of South Carolina's citizens in their natural world and the necessity of protecting it."

Vitali adds: "He's an accomplished sportsman who has long advocated for the preservation of S.C.'s wilderness areas and game-management lands. He also has a distinguished albeit unique military background: He is a gifted and qualified leader whose keen intellect and impeccable character have enabled his success as both a U.S. Army officer and a certified Army master fitness trainer, but he particularly distinguished himself as commanding general of the S.C. State Guard where he implemented a rigorous training methodology."

Mullikin is S.C. Governor Henry McMaster's pick to lead SCDNR. McMaster also selected Mullikin to chair his S.C. Floodwater Commission in 2018 following Mullikin's retirement as two-star

commanding general of the S.C. State Guard. In 2023, McMaster also appointed Mullikin to the board of the S.C. Conservation Bank.

“Tom is an excellent selection for this most important position of SCDNR director,” said Dr. Geoff Scott a former NOAA research facility director who today serves as clinical professor and chair of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina. “His vast knowledge as a conservationist as well as his keen understanding of the importance of S.C.s natural resources, he will mesh well with the scientists, researchers and conservation officers within SCDNR to continue their tradition of conserving and protecting South Carolina’s natural resources. Tom will also continue the superb tradition of outstanding leadership within the agency provided by the previous SCDNR directors over the past 50 years or so.”

Executive leadership is not new to Mullikin, though this will be his first cabinet-level directorship. An attorney, university professor, former U.S. Army officer, retired State Guard commander and Floodwater Commission chair, Mullikin is perhaps best known for his leadership of the annual SOUTH CAROLINA SEVEN (SC7) Expedition from the mountains to sea, and his overall command of numerous arduous expeditions to every continent on Earth, climbing four of the world’s Seven Great Summits, and leading SCUBA-diving excursions in all Earth’s five oceans, many seas, and other remote waterways.



Dr. Tom Mullikin (white beard and blue ballcap) with SCDNR officials and members of the media aboard Coastal Carolina University’s research vessel off the S.C. coast, July 19, 2023.



Dr. Tom Mullikin and S.C. Governor Henry McMaster addressing the media, Dec. 2018.

As a global explorer, Mullikin has served as a “National Geographic Expert.” He is a Fellow in the Manhattan-based Explorer’s Club and a Fellow in London’s Royal Geographical Society.

Retired U.S. Marine Maj. Gen. James E. Livingston, said: “Tom Mullikin, and those like him who have climbed many of the world’s great summits, is a model of perseverance.”

The late founder and first commanding officer of SEAL Team Six (aka DEVGRU) Richard Marcinko, once said: “Men like Tom are the kind of men who push the envelope beyond normal human endurance to achieve life’s great summits.”

A lifelong outdoorsman and sportsman – hunting, sport shooting, fishing, and equestrian sports (a longtime supporter and now boardmember of the Camden, S.C.-based Carolina Cup Racing Association) – Mullikin is also a law enforcement leader and supporter who is a formerly certified S.C. State Constable, a special deputy with the Richland County Sheriff’s Department (RCSD), and a former member of RCSD’s Waterborne Operations Team (Marine Patrol and Dive Team).

“Tom Mullikin is a great outdoorsman and protector of our natural resources,” said Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott. “I have spent many hours in the outdoors with him hunting, fishing and hiking throughout our State and in Louisiana, Texas and Alaska.”

Mullikin is also an inductee in the elite S.C. Black Belt Hall of Fame (SCBBHOF).

“Tom’s passion for the environment and the natural world around us is but one of the many reasons he’s the perfect choice to lead SCDNR going forward,” said Bruce Brutschy, a 10th-degree black belt and fellow inductee [with Mullikin] in the SCBBHOF. “He’s also one of our state’s champions when it comes to participation in and support of shooting sports, hunting, fishing, hiking, diving, and generally exploring the highways, byways, and waterways of the Palmetto State. I know these thing first-hand as I’ve participated with him in all for years. ”

The S.C. Senate confirmation hearing is slated for Wednesday, January 29, 2025.

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